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Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Report on the meetings of the Bureau of the Commission on Population and Development

I. Introduction

1. At its thirtieth session, in 1997, the Commission on Population and Development authorized the Bureau to hold intersessional meetings in preparation for its sessions.[1] In 2006, in resolution 2006/1 on its methods of work, the Commission requested its Bureau to meet as frequently as necessary in preparation for the annual sessions of the Commission. The Commission also stressed the importance of making written reports on the meetings of the Bureau.[2] In accordance with resolution 2006/1, the Bureau held three meetings between October 2007 and mid-January 2008 and may convene others before the forty-first session of the Commission resumes in April 2008. The three meetings of the Bureau held so far took place in New York on 16 October and 11 December 2007 and in Sofia on 14 and 15 January 2008. The third meeting, hosted by the Government of Bulgaria, which would have normally been held before the end of 2007, was postponed by decision of the Bureau to January 2008.

2. The first meeting of the Bureau, on 16 October 2007, was attended by Ivan Piperkov (Chairman), Hossein Gharibi, Fredrick Matwang'a and Pauline Eizema. Alicia Melgar participated in the meeting via teleconference. Present at the second meeting, on 11 December 2007, were Mr. Piperkov (Chairman), Mr. Gharibi and Ms. Eizema, while Ms. Melgar participated via teleconference. At the third meeting on 14 and 15 January 2008, Mr. Piperkov (Chairman), Mr. Matwang'a and Ms. Eizema participated. The Director of the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and a representative of the United Nations

* E/CN.9/2008/1.

[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1997, Supplement No. 5* (E/1997/5), para. 52.

[2] Commission on Population and Development decision 2005/2.

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Population Fund (UNFPA) were present at all meetings of the Bureau. The Secretary of the Commission participated in the meetings held in New York.

3. The present report summarizes the discussions of the Bureau at those meetings as well as the conclusions reached and the recommendations made.

II. Summary of the deliberations of the Bureau

A. Organization of work for the forty-first session of the Commission

4. The Bureau reviewed the organization of work for the forty-first session and found it acceptable.

B. Keynote speakers

5. At its thirty-eighth session, in its decision 2005/2, the Commission welcomed the format of inviting keynote speakers to the sessions of the Commission and requested the Bureau to make the necessary arrangements for their participation and to inform members accordingly. In accordance with that decision, the Bureau decided that four keynote speakers would be invited to address the Commission on the special theme "Population distribution, urbanization, internal migration and development" and that each speaker would be allotted an hour to make a presentation and have an interactive dialogue with members of the Commission. The Bureau selected Mark Montgomery, Eduardo Moreno, David Satterthwaite and Helen Zille as keynote speakers. Mr. Montgomery, Senior Associate at the Policy Research Division of the Population Council and Professor in the Economics Department of the State University of New York at Stony Brook, will focus on the topic "Urban growth and poverty". Mr. Moreno, Chief of the Global Urban Observatory of the Monitoring System Branch of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in Nairobi, will focus on the topic "Improving the lives of urban slum-dwellers". Mr. Satterthwaite, Senior Fellow at the International Institute for Environment and Development, will speak on the topic "Urbanization and internal migration: their relevance for sustainable development". Ms. Zille, Mayor of Cape Town and former Minister of Education in the Western Cape province of South Africa, will address the issue "Urban governance, lessons learned and challenges ahead: the case of Cape Town". As has become customary, the Bureau recommended that the working group be adjourned during the presentations made by keynote speakers.

C. Participation of relevant United Nations entities in the Commission on Population and Development

6. The Bureau noted that the topic of the forty-first session was relevant for a number of United Nations entities, such as UN-Habitat and the United Nations University. Thus, the Bureau requested the secretariat to encourage those organizations to participate in the Commission's session and to invite them to consider organizing side-events during the session. As for other sessions of the Commission, the possibility of UNFPA organizing a side-event was welcomed.

D. Communication of the Chairman with members of the Commission

7. The Bureau requested its Chairman to send a letter to the members of the Commission underscoring the need to have technical representatives attend the forty-first session, that is, specialists in the area of population distribution, urbanization, internal migration and development. The letter would also provide guidance to members of the Commission regarding the items under which statements could be made and would outline the relevance of the various items on the agenda of the forty-first session. Information about how to have access to preliminary versions of the documentation for the session would also be included. The letter might also explain the importance of considering ways of strengthening the links between the functional commissions and the work of the Economic and Social Council.

E. Relationship of the Commission on Population and Development with the Economic and Social Council

8. The Bureau took note of the contribution made by Mr. Piperkov, Chairman of the Commission on Population and Development, to the panel discussion of the Chairpersons of the functional commissions on the topic "Working together to promote the goals of decent work and full employment for all", which was held in Geneva on 10 July 2007, during the coordination segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council. Mr. Piperkov's presentation to the panel stressed the importance of considering population issues to inform the debate on decent work and full employment, particularly in regard to the effects of changing age distributions on the size of the labour force and the interrelationships between international migration and labour force trends.

9. Mr. Piperkov reported on his participation on behalf of the Commission in the meeting between the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council and the chairs of the functional commissions, held in Geneva in July 2007. The main purpose of that meeting was to discuss how the functional commissions could contribute to the work of the strengthened Council, particularly to the annual ministerial review and the biennial development cooperation forum, both of which were conducted within the high-level segment of the Council's substantive session. At the time of the meeting, the Council had not yet established a multi-year thematic programme for the annual ministerial review. The representatives of the functional commissions noted that, since several commissions had already established multi-year work programmes, it would not be possible to align their work programmes with the themes adopted for the annual ministerial review. Nevertheless, since it was expected that the Council would establish the themes of the review at least two years in advance, the functional commissions would consider how best to contribute to that work.

10. The Bureau was informed of the meeting that would be convened in New York on 29 January 2008 between the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council and the chairs of the functional commissions to discuss the various ways in which the functional commissions might contribute to the annual ministerial review and the development cooperation forum. The Bureau considered several options to address the implications of Council reform for its work. As a first step, the Bureau decided to invite the President of the Council to make a presentation to the Commission, at

its forty-first session, on the new mandates that the Council has undertaken and the importance of having the functional commissions support the annual ministerial review and the development cooperation forum. The Bureau took note of the special theme selected for the review in 2008, namely, "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development", and remarked that the Commission could make an important contribution to the discussion of that theme on the basis of its own special theme for the forty-first session. Therefore, the Bureau requested that its Chairman make a statement during the annual ministerial review in July 2008.

11. The Bureau considered other ways to engage the members of the Commission in providing relevant input for the annual ministerial review. Noting that the theme for the review in 2009 would be "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health", the Bureau suggested that a new item be added to the draft agenda for its forty-second session, namely, "Debate on the contribution of population and development issues to the annual ministerial review theme and to the development cooperation forum". Under that item, members of the Commission would be invited to make presentations on their own experience regarding the relevance of population issues for public health. A format similar to the voluntary country presentations made at the annual ministerial review could be considered for this new agenda item. The debate under the new item would provide useful input for the review, which would be transmitted via a statement by the Chairman of the Commission. Although it remained to be seen how the development cooperation forum would develop, the possibility of providing inputs for it should also be considered under that item.

12. In view of the above, the Bureau noted that it would be best if the person chairing a session of the Commission would be the same person who represented the Commission during the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, including during the annual ministerial review. A way to make this possible was to be explored. If it were not feasible, the Bureau recommended that the newly elected Chairperson meet with the previous Chairperson to be briefed on issues to bring to the attention of the annual ministerial review.

13. In sum, the Bureau requested its Chairman to transmit to the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council the following suggestions: (a) that the President of the Council be invited to address the Commission at its forty-first session; and (b) that the Chairperson of the Commission be allowed to make a statement at the annual ministerial review in July 2008. The Bureau further suggested that the agendas of future sessions of the Commission include an item focusing on the contribution of population and development issues to the theme of the annual ministerial review and to the development cooperation forum.

F. Special theme for the forty-third session of the Commission

14. The Bureau recalled the Commission's decision 2007/1, in which the Commission decided that the special theme for its forty-second session, in 2009, would be "The contribution of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development to the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals". The Bureau

took note of the need to establish a multi-year work programme for the Commission and discussed the possible options for 2010.

15. The Bureau noted that the Commission had last considered health, mortality and their interrelationships with development in 1998. It was therefore timely to consider that topic again in 2010. The Bureau further noted that health and mortality issues figured prominently in the Millennium Development Goals and that the General Assembly was due to review in 2010 the achievement of the goals set in the Millennium Declaration and the World Summit Outcome. The Bureau therefore recommended that the theme for the Commission's forty-third session, in 2010, be "Health, morbidity, mortality and development".

G. Resolutions and decisions

16. The Bureau recommended that the Commission consider adopting (a) a decision on the draft agenda for the forty-second session; (b) a decision on the theme for its forty-third session, in 2010; (c) a resolution on the special theme of the forty-first session, namely, "Population distribution, urbanization, internal migration and development"; and (d) a resolution on the work programme of the Population Division.

17. As for previous sessions, the Bureau recommended that a working group be established at the start of the resumed forty-first session of the Commission to discuss issues that might result in resolutions or decisions. The working group should begin its work on the afternoon of the first day of the resumed session of the Commission. The Bureau also recommended that the Chairperson of the Commission distribute initial drafts of resolutions and decisions to facilitate the deliberations of the working group and requested the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to prepare those drafts after consultation with UNFPA. The Bureau further requested that the Chairperson's drafts be made available to members of the Commission and the regional groups three weeks prior to the resumption of the forty-first session of the Commission.

H. Briefing for members of the Commission

18. The Bureau recommended that the Director of the Population Division organize, about a month prior to the resumption of the forty-first session of the Commission, a briefing for delegations on the status of documentation for the session, the organization of work and the resolutions and decisions likely to be considered by the Commission.

19. The Bureau stressed the importance of the timely availability of documents for the forty-first session in order to facilitate the preparation of statements by delegations. The Bureau endorsed the posting on the Internet of advance unedited versions of those documents in English.

I. Work programme of the secretariat in the field of population

20. The Bureau noted that the work programme of the Population Division responded flexibly to the changing needs of Member States and stressed the

importance of maintaining a comprehensive approach to population and development issues. The Bureau observed that the last time the Commission had adopted a resolution on the work programme of the Population Division was in 2004, and it was therefore time to review and update it. Hence, the Bureau suggested that the Commission consider at its forty-first session a resolution on the work programme of the Population Division.

J. Conclusions and recommendations

21. **The Bureau of the Commission on Population and Development met three times, in New York on 16 October and 11 December 2007 and in Sofia on 14 and 15 January 2008. The conclusions and recommendations resulting from those three meetings are summarized below.**

22. **The Bureau recommended the adoption of the draft organization of work for the forty-first session of the Commission.**

23. **The Bureau decided that four keynote speakers would be invited to address the Commission on the special theme "Population distribution, urbanization, internal migration and development".**

24. **The Bureau recommended that the President of the Economic and Social Council be invited to address the Commission on the new mandates the Council had undertaken and the importance of having the functional commissions support the annual ministerial review and the development cooperation forum.**

25. **To reinforce the contribution of the Commission to the work of the Council, the Bureau suggested that the draft agenda for the forty-second session include a new item entitled "Debate on the contribution of population and development issues to the annual ministerial review theme and the development cooperation forum".**

26. **The Bureau suggested that the Chairperson of the Commission make a statement at the high-level segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in 2008.**

27. **The Bureau recommended that the special theme for 2010 be "Health, morbidity, mortality and development".**

28. **The Bureau recommended that a working group be established at the start of the resumed forty-first session of the Commission to discuss issues that might result in resolutions or decisions. The working group should begin its work on the afternoon of the first day of the resumed session of the Commission.**

29. **The Bureau recommended that the Commission consider adopting (a) a decision on the agenda for the forty-second session; (b) a decision on the themes associated with a multi-year work programme and on a theme for the forty-third session, in 2010; (c) a resolution on the special theme of the forty-first session, namely, "Population distribution, urbanization, internal migration and development"; and (d) a resolution on the work programme of the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.**

30. **The Bureau requested that the Population Division, after consultation with UNFPA, prepare for the Chairperson of the Commission initial drafts of**

resolutions and decisions that might facilitate the deliberations of the working group. The Bureau requested that the Chairperson's drafts be made available to members of the Commission and to the regional groups at least three weeks prior to the resumption of the forty-first session of the Commission.

31. **The Bureau recommended that the Director of the Population Division organize, a month prior to the resumption of the forty-first session of the Commission, a briefing for delegations on the status of documentation for the session, the organization of work and the resolutions and decisions likely to be considered by the Commission.**